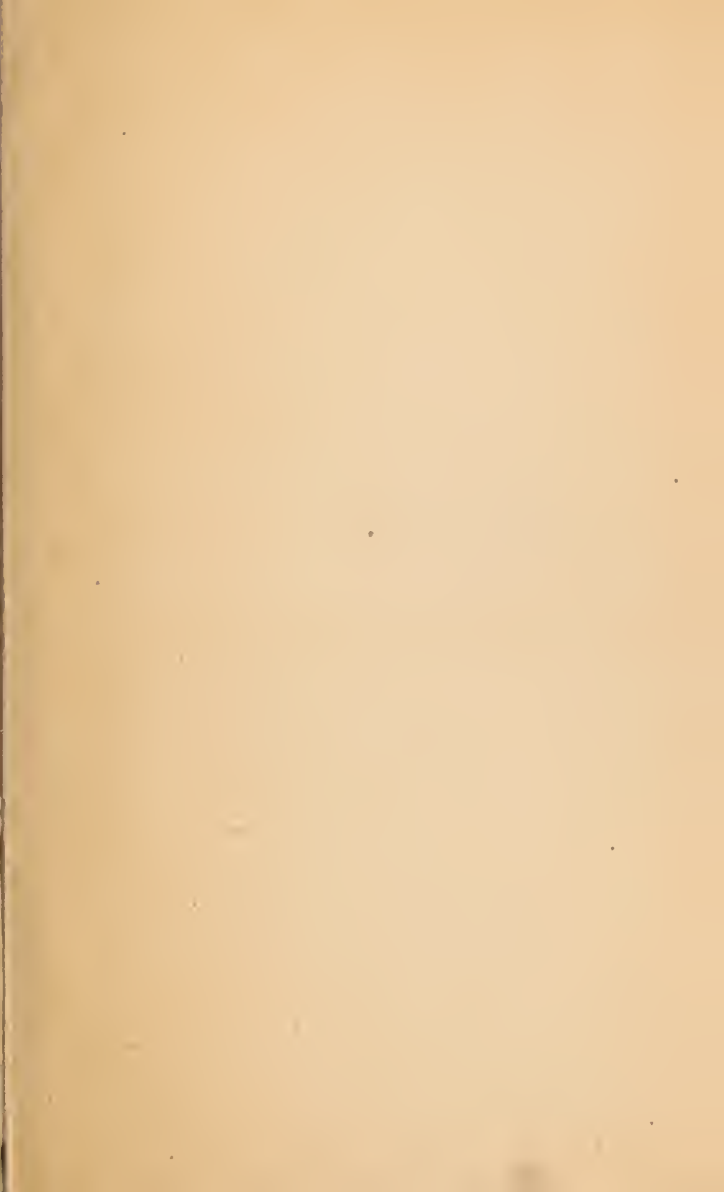


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# The Historic and the Inward Christ :

A STUDY IN QUAKER THOUGHT

BY  
EDWARD GRUBB, M.A.

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## Preface

ONE of the deepest and most pregnant distinctions between early Quakerism and the other forms of organized Christianity in the seventeenth century lay in the place it assigned to Belief in the doctrines which were regarded as orthodox. While it by no means asserted that correctness of Belief is unimportant, it did not regard it as the first thing necessary for salvation. The essence of true Christianity it found in a saving experience of the life of God in the soul, transforming the character into the character of Jesus Christ ; and it relegated to a secondary place intellectual definitions concerning the nature of His Person and of His saving work. Its primary emphasis was inward and ethical. Salvation it regarded as essentially a work to be wrought *in* man, and not merely *for* him ; as a transforming experience to be known in the soul here and now, and not mainly as a means of escaping penalty in the world to come. In the words of William Penn :

It is not opinion, or speculation, or notions of what is true ; or assent to, or the subscription of,

articles or propositions, though never so soundly worded, that makes a man a true believer or a true Christian. But it is a conformity of mind and practice to the will of God, in all holiness of conversation, according to the dictates of the divine principle of light and life in the soul, which denotes a person *truly* a child of God.<sup>1</sup>

Since the days of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, this primary emphasis on the inward and experiential nature of Christian faith has gradually permeated Protestant thought, and now appears in the teaching of many of the spiritual descendants of the Puritans to whom in the seventeenth century it seemed a pestilent heresy. But, just as those two great Christian thinkers, especially Ritschl, went too far in rejecting as unnecessary and even harmful the attempt to frame a philosophy of Christian doctrine, so I believe the Society of Friends has suffered throughout its history from a tendency to undervalue and even to despise theology. The human mind is so constituted that it cannot *permanently* rest in a method of thinking that divides religious from ordinary experience, and places them in watertight compartments of thought ; it inevitably seeks for the *unification* of its knowledge. As a recent writer has said :

Christianity is unable permanently to dispense with the work of the scientific theologian. The example of

<sup>1</sup> *A Key opening the Way to every Capacity* (1692).

those Churches where intellectual darkness has been followed by spiritual decline leads us to infer that no high level of spiritual experience can ever long be maintained except where its results are garnered by careful intellectual labour.<sup>1</sup>

The following pages will illustrate, I believe, the truth of this contention in the case of the Society of Friends. They have been written in the desire to help forward, in however small a measure, the discovery of a true statement of Quaker faith, in the central field of Christian thought and experience: the finding of an answer that may satisfy ourselves and others to the great question, What think ye of Christ? That answer should be one that unites in a luminous whole of thought the Jesus of history and the Christ of inward experience.

EDWARD GRUBB.

26, Avondale Road,

Croydon.

March 28th, 1914.

<sup>1</sup> *Religion in an Age of Doubt*, by Charles J. Shebbeare, M.A., p. 22.



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# The Historic and the Inward Christ

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## I.

### INTRODUCTORY

THE question suggested in the title of this lecture is of far more than academic or theological importance. In the interests, not of abstract truth merely, but of our corporate usefulness as a religious Society, I feel the duty laid upon me of urging upon Friends the necessity for careful thought and study concerning the basis of their message for the world.

We live in a day of free enquiry, when authorities, however venerable, are questioned on every hand, and when doctrines, however sound, that are received and taught from tradition merely, will not furnish a living witness to the Truth. Many of our own members, and multitudes in the great world around us, are seeking for a spiritual life which they have not

found ; some have reached an inward experience of God, but do not yet know what to do with Jesus Christ. The common presentation of Christianity repels them, because it assures them that through Christ alone can access to God be obtained ; and this does not find a witness in their own consciousness, which has become aware of God but not of Christ. To many, who revere Him as saint and prophet, there appears no reason why they should try to think of a person who lived so long ago as the centre of their own religious life to-day ; they may be prepared to welcome the thought of Incarnation, but question why this should be ascribed to Christ alone.

Behind all this, there is the old difficulty of the relation of Faith to Facts : the question whether Faith, which should yield absolute certitude of its Object, is not out of place in relation to events in history, which must always be subject to criticism. There is a tendency, which is worthy of respect, to take refuge from the uncertainties of historical enquiry in the search for a faith that is wholly independent of events that are alleged to have happened in the past. Faith, it is felt, is within the reach of all, whether educated or unlearned ; but belief in past events, to be of any real value, demands the careful examination

and weighing of evidence, for which only the few have leisure or ability.

If the Society of Friends is to do its work in bearing witness to the world of the truth of God, it must be willing to face with courage these and kindred questions. If it is to help the struggling souls, within and without its borders, into the sure anchorage of Christian faith, it must, in particular, seek for clearer light than it has yet attained on the connection between the direct experience of God in the soul and the revelation brought in history by Jesus of Nazareth ; it must unite, more effectively than in the past, the Jesus of history with the living " Christ " of experience.

Now, the Christian religion took its rise in a historic Person, whose character and influence were such that His followers, within a few years of His departure from them in the body, felt themselves compelled by an irresistible necessity to worship Him as Divine. Those followers, we must remember, had been neither pagan Greeks, nor Emperor-worshipping Romans, nor Oriental mystics, most of whom would have found little difficulty in the thought of a deified man, or of a God appearing in human guise ; they were Jews,

trained in a severe and even fanatical monotheism. Their confession of the Divinity of their Master cannot therefore be accounted for by supposing that their minds became a prey to mythology and superstition ; it can only be explained by two facts, one outward and the other inward : first, the fact of the personality and career of Jesus of Nazareth ; and second, the experience of a new relation to God into which Jesus had lifted them, and of which they felt Him to be still the foundation.

It follows that Christianity, from the earliest days, has blended together two elements, which we may call the historical and the inward or spiritual. It has involved belief in certain outward historical facts—those, namely, concerning the personality and work of Jesus ; and at the same time it has meant an inward consciousness of being saved from sin and brought into a personal relation to God, of which Jesus has remained, alike to the individual and to the community of disciples, the centre and the basis.

This blending of two distinct elements inevitably gave rise to questioning—particularly when the subtle Greek intellect was brought into touch with the new faith, and when the followers of Jesus had to meet the attacks of opponents

trained in philosophic thought. The question that could not long be suppressed was this : Who and what is Jesus of Nazareth, that He should be able to bring to men this new moral life, and give them this fresh and happy consciousness of God ?

The first attempt to answer this great question that has come down to us is that of the Apostle Paul—some of whose letters are probably the earliest Christian writings we possess. His answer is to be found in the thought—which undoubtedly he felt he owed to the inward teaching of his Master's Spirit—of the *pre-existence* of Christ : that the historical life of Jesus on earth was the manifestation in a real human personality of an eternal Spirit, who was (to use a specially Pauline expression) the “image” of God Himself. But Paul's main interest was neither speculative nor historical : he does not dwell on his theory of Christ, and has little to say about His life or teaching : what he is mainly concerned to do is to bring out the new life of sonship with God into which Christ raises the believer by leading him into a “mystical union” with Himself. It is the inward or spiritual side that mainly interests Paul.

The first three Gospels, on the other hand, though written probably when Pauline thoughts concerning Christ had found acceptance in the Church, are yet mainly written from the historical standpoint; they reproduce, it is believed with wonderful fidelity, the impression made by that marvellous life on those who witnessed it. The "Acts of the Apostles" carries on the history, dealing with the early Apostolic preaching; and here also there is but little of theory about Christ beyond the declaration that He fulfilled, in spite of a shameful death, the Jewish prophecies of a Messiah. The Epistle to the Hebrews develops, in the light of Alexandrian thought, the Pauline doctrine of Christ as the "Son" and "very image" of God, but it displays a stronger hold than is found in Paul's writings on the facts of the real humanity of Jesus, especially in the sphere of temptation.

It is, however, in the Fourth Gospel and the first Johannine Epistle that the two elements, the historical and the inward, are for the first time brought closely together. The author of the Fourth Gospel (as is being powerfully shown by Dr. E. A. Abbott in his exhaustive study of "The Fourfold Gospel") endeavoured

to rewrite the story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus from a new point of view—that of His life in the body being an Incarnation of the eternal Divine Word or “Logos.” This thought of the Logos was a conception familiar to the educated people of the first century, both Jews and Greeks. One of the writer’s objects, apparently, was to re-interpret the earlier Gospels in the light of this conception, and to bring out the hidden and spiritual meaning of the facts they had recorded. At the same time he clearly wished to correct a tendency, which had begun even in the first century, to use the spiritual teaching of Paul in such a way as to undervalue the historical facts in the life of Jesus, even to the point of representing them as mere appearances, or at best as symbols of spiritual truth. This insistence on historical reality is seen especially in the opening words of his first Epistle, concerning “that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled.”<sup>1</sup> The first Christian

<sup>1</sup> It appears also, probably, in the strong insistence, both in the Gospel and the Epistle, on the “blood and water” which flowed from the side of Jesus on the Cross, and which seem to have afforded to the writer positive evidence that His body was identical in character with our own.

heresy, which is combated in these writings, was the denial of the real and true humanity of Jesus, and it is known under the general name of *Docetism* (from a Greek word meaning to "seem" or "appear").

The history of Christianity during the four centuries that followed is very largely the story of the efforts made by the Christianised Greek intellect to find a satisfying theory of the nature of Jesus Christ. The endeavour was made so to formulate the theory as to commit the whole Church to one uniform answer, and to excommunicate as heretical all who refused to accept it. The result was to generate the almost universal conviction that correctness of intellectual belief was the first and chief condition of winning eternal salvation: "he that would be saved," says the Athanasian Creed, "must think thus." Into the history of creed-building we cannot enter here. The edifice was completed in the statement issued by the Council of Bishops at Chalcedon in 451 A.D., which has remained the standard of Christological orthodoxy ever since. The principal affirmation is that Jesus was "of the same nature" as God, and also "of the same nature" as men: that in Him the two



“natures,” Divine and human, were united in a single “Person,” neither being lost or absorbed in the other. The Creed never explained how this could be. It left the two “natures,” which were regarded as radically different, side by side, and the difficulty remained unresolved how, without confusion or contradiction, they could be combined in an undivided “Person.” The beautiful phrase of the Athanasian Creed, that Christ was One Person “by taking up the manhood into God” does not really explain anything. In short, the orthodox Creeds leave the intellectual difficulty where they find it. Their value is in giving danger-signals against paths of thought that have been tried and failed; they have little to offer in the way of positive guidance.

The consequence is that there has always been, in the Christian Church, a tendency to simplify the matter by ignoring one side of the problem; and, as the Church has always wished to magnify the Divine character of its Lord and Redeemer, it is the human side that has mainly been depreciated. The Docetist tendency, under various names, has been constantly recurring in Christian thought, and is with us still.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century scarcely touched the standard of orthodox belief in the matter of Christology. At first it meant a great recovery of the inward life of personal Christian experience, which had been strong in Pauline and early Christianity, which the "mystics" in the Church had striven to reproduce, but which had often been suppressed as heresy. But the Reformers found themselves faced with a double conflict : on the one hand against the mighty authority of the Roman Church, and on the other against the wilder spirits who were turning the new-found liberty into licence. In this two-fold struggle the successors of the first Reformers had recourse to the weapon that lay nearest to their hands ; and in the place of the authority of an infallible Church they set up the authority of an infallible Bible or " Word of God." This meant that the note of personal religious experience, which the first reformers had powerfully touched, was largely lost. God had spoken directly to men, in the days when the Bible was being penned, but He spoke so no longer. All that could be authentically known of Him was to be found in the pages of a book to which no word had been added for fifteen hundred years.

Once more salvation was made to depend in effect, if not in intention, upon correctness of belief. Acceptance of the literal truth of every word of Scripture—interpreted, as in fact it was, in the light of the historic Creeds—became the first condition of being a Christian. God was in effect driven to a distance from men. Jesus Christ was a dim historic Figure who had wrought salvation for His chosen ones in the far-back ages of the past. Any assertion that He is living and reproducing His own life and character in the experience of His true disciples—that through Him they have access to the authentic Voice of God as the early Apostles had—was denounced as heresy, and those who held it were fiercely persecuted as enemies of Christ. The historic and speculative side of Christian faith had almost destroyed the inward and spiritual.

## II.

### THE QUAKER REVIVAL.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, when George Fox began his public ministry, many souls were hungering for a message of living reality such as the Puritan pulpits did not offer. In the later chapters of Dr. Rufus

Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion*,<sup>1</sup> it is shown how, even before George Fox heard the "Voice which said, There is one, even Jesus Christ, who can speak to thy condition," great numbers of "Seekers" after God, in various parts of England, had left the organized worship of the Puritan Churches, and were eagerly looking for a new revelation of truth. Some of these believed they found it, and anticipated, in greater or less degree, almost all that the Quaker pioneers declared. Among the pioneers themselves were those who had reached a personal experience similar to that of Fox before even they joined the Quakers. James Nayler, who, in spite of his sorrowful lapse from sobriety, was one of the most lovely and gifted spirits of the Quaker revival, made this declaration when brought before the justices at Appleby in 1653 :

I was at the plough, meditating on the things of God, and suddenly I heard a Voice saying unto me, "Get thee out from thy kindred and from thy father's house." And I had a promise given in with it. Whereupon I did exceedingly rejoice, that I had heard the voice of that God which I had professed from a child, but had never known Him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See esp. chap. xix., *The Seekers and the Ranters*.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, p. 12. Also printed in *Saul's Errand to Damascus* (1653), p. 31.

And after he had become a Quaker he wrote to his friends in the North :

Dear hearts, it's by the arising of the Almighty we have unity and strength ; the Morning of our Light he is in us, and his Rising is our glory and crown, and he is the Father of all our righteousness in the harmlessness of our hearts. How often doth he revive us with new life, and refresh us with the streams of his pure virtue, and is more in our hearts many times than tongue can utter.<sup>1</sup>

William Dewsbury, another of Fox's earliest collaborators, thus summarises his conviction and preaching :—

And this I declare to all the inhabitants in England, and all that dwell upon the earth, that God alone is the Teacher of his people, and hath given to everyone a measure of Grace, which is the Light that comes from Christ . . . And this I witness to all the sons of men, that the knowledge of Eternal Life I came not to by the letter of Scripture, nor hearing men speak of the name of God ; I came to the true knowledge of the Scripture, and the eternal rest, by the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly such expressions point to a recovery of the experience of an inward Christ, which Puritanism, with all its moral earnestness, had nearly lost. The Christian life of these men does not stand in what they have heard from others, or read in a book, about Jesus Christ and

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 733.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, p. 54.

His work for men in the past; but in what they have known for themselves as a living present reality. The Christ whom they proclaim as Saviour and Redeemer is

No dead fact stranded on the shore  
Of the oblivious years,

but One who may be known as a bright reality in the soul of everyone who will but seek for Him in sincerity and obedience. This living Presence—cleansing, renewing, inspiring, which they believed in because it was the deepest fact of their experience—they called the “Light,” or the “Seed,” and they placed in the very forefront of their message the assurance that in some measure it was given to *all* men. Whether they spoke of the “Spirit,” or the “Seed of God,” or the “Light of Christ,” they meant the same: that this, which they felt within them, was no prerogative of a favoured few, but was, as the Fourth Evangelist declared, a “Light that lighteth every man,” so that “all” human beings were in some measure “taught of God,” if only they would “hear and learn” (John vi. 45). They had recovered something of the largeness and breadth (as well as depth) of vision of that great Christian seer—which,

though most of them did not know it, is also abundantly reflected in the writings of many of the early Greek Fathers.

### III.

#### EARLY QUAKER CONTROVERSIES.

But, as we have seen, such affirmations were the rankest heresy to the Puritan theologians of that day. Accordingly, the Quaker pioneers found themselves embarked on a sea of religious controversy, the character of which has been vividly sketched by W. C. Braithwaite in chapter xii. of his *Beginnings of Quakerism*. It is no part of my present purpose to deal with this, except in so far as it turned on the question whether, in preaching a present and living Christ manifested in some measure in the soul of every man, they denied, or ignored, or undervalued the historical manifestation of God in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. To many of their orthodox opponents it seemed very clear that they did so. Among these opponents were saintly men like Richard Baxter, who, in his *Quaker's Catechism* (1657) quite unjustly charged the Friends with denying "that there is

any such person as Jesus Christ, who suffered at Jerusalem"; and John Bunyan, whose controversy with Edward Burrough, the young Quaker, is well known. In 1656 Bunyan bitterly attacked the followers of Fox in his book *Some Gospel Truths opened*, and being replied to by Edward Burrough followed this up by a *Vindication* of his former work (1657). In this he asserts that the Quakers, along with the "Familists and Ranters,"

either deny Christ to be a real man without them, blasphemously fancying him to be only God manifested in their flesh; or else make his human nature, with the fulness of the Godhead in it, to be but a type of God manifested in the saints.

With the crudity of youthful dogmatism, Bunyan insists that Jesus, at His ascension, went *away from* His disciples into heaven, "in his body of flesh and bones," and not *into* them, as the Quakers falsely declared; and that their only "hope of felicity" is in the belief "that the Son of Mary is now absent from his children in his person and humanity, making intercession for them in the presence of his Father." Insistence on this strange doctrine, that the actual body of Jesus must be regarded as now in heaven, was quite frequent among the opponents



of the early Friends, including George Keith, who himself had long been a Quaker.

A somewhat more scholarly opponent than Bunyan was Matthew Caffyn, also a Baptist. In his book, *The Deceived and Deceiving Quakers Discovered* (1656), he admits that the Quakers "say that they own him who suffered upon Mount Calvary," but charges them with meaning only "the Spirit within him, which spirit they say is now within their bodies of flesh"; and he continues :

Now we cannot but know that it was a fleshly substantial body of Christ that they slew, murdered and crucified upon the tree; and in so doing the apostles unanimously affirm that they slew Jesus (which in English is Saviour), and yet doth he not through it save? . . . Now by what hath been said, 'tis evident that the Quaker confesses him not come in the flesh as all the Apostles did, so as through the breaking of it [the flesh], and blood-shedding of it, to effect man's salvation.

It is clear that to these opponents the Quaker assertion of the Inward Christ appears to be the denial of the Historical.

Attacks such as these, and many others, were replied to by George Fox and Edward Burrough<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edward Burrough signs the Preface only, but I suspect that he had a hand in writing a good deal of the book.

in *The Great Mystery* (1659), which deals with charges made against Friends in over one hundred books and pamphlets. Another redoubtable champion of the new faith was Samuel Fisher, a learned man, whose prodigious work *Rusticus ad Academicos* (1660) "is the most important piece of Quaker controversy belonging to the Commonwealth period." It contains, however, very little bearing on the subject now before us.

In none of these early Quaker writings was the central difficulty really met. Perhaps, indeed, it was not even realised at all. In the writings of George Fox, so far as I have been able to discover, there is no sign that he, in the simplicity of his heart's experience, felt that there was anything that could give rise to question in using the same term "Christ" for the living and saving Presence which he and his friends felt in their souls, and for the man who lived and died in Palestine sixteen hundred years before. Of course, they all accepted, in full sincerity of conviction, the belief that Jesus was Divine; but this is no solution of the intellectual difficulty how, being one with God, and therefore eternal, He was also fully and truly a man, living at a particular time and place.

The centre of Christian faith, on its intellectual side—and it has an intellectual side, because human faith is the response of our *whole* being to God—is the belief that “The Word became flesh”: that a Timeless and Omnipresent Spirit, in some sense one with God, took upon Him the limitations of time and space and finite humanity. To the bare intellect, this belief seems to involve a hopeless contradiction; and though countless devout Christian souls have always been satisfied to hold it by “faith,” though they could in no way resolve it, others, no less devout, have felt that their love of truth impelled them to make the attempt to transcend the contradiction it apparently contains. The orthodox Creeds, as we have seen, left the difficulty where they found it. We cannot be too thankful that, in form at least, they preserved both elements—the divine and the human, the eternal and the temporal; but the doctrine of two (as it seemed) radically different “natures” united in a single “person” has not satisfied, and does not now satisfy, many sincere and earnest Christian souls who are compelled to use their reason.

## IV.

## ISAAC PENINGTON'S CHRISTOLOGY.

Most of the early Friends did not feel it right to use their reason on these matters. Their assurance of the "Inward Light" of the Divine Spirit was so strong that they feared any use of their own minds would but obstruct its beams. And so their weakness in theology, on which some of them rather prided themselves, too often exposed them to the easy taunts of their adversaries.

The first of them, so far as I can discover, whose mind was vigorously exercised on the problem of Christology was the saint and mystic, Isaac Penington—a man of wealth and liberal education, who had passed through very deep waters of doubt and perplexity before he found at last, in the year 1658, through association with the Quakers whom he had long despised, the heavenly Presence that satisfied his soul's hunger. Penington seems to have reached for himself a fairly clear and definite theory of the Person of Christ, which apparently was accepted by his friends, and which moulded their thoughts on the subject for several genera-

tions. It is first clearly enunciated, I believe, in his *Examination of the Grounds or Causes* which induced the Government of Boston, New England, to make an order for the banishment of the Quakers from that Colony on pain of death; under which order four of them were actually hanged on Boston Common. The Order of banishment was made in 1659, and though Penington's *Examination* is undated, it was probably written in 1660. It contains a section "Concerning the Person of Christ," which was obviously very carefully written, and the major part of which runs as follows :

They [the Quakers] believe that Christ is the eternal light, life, wisdom and power of God, which was manifested in that body of flesh which he took of the Virgin: that he is the king, priest and prophet of his people, and saveth them from their sins by laying down his life for them, and imputing his righteousness to them; yet not without revealing and bringing forth the same righteousness in them, which he wrought for them. [Note his insistence on the *inwardness* of real Christianity.] And by experience they know that there is no being saved by a belief of his death for them, and of his resurrection, ascension, intercession, etc., without being brought into a true fellowship with him in his death, and without feeling his immortal seed of life raised and living in them. And so they disown the faith in Christ's death which is only received and entertained from the relation of the letter of the Scriptures, and stands not in the Divine power, and sensible experience, of the begotten of God in the heart.

So far, Penington's exposition is but an excellent statement of what the Friends had always urged—that salvation is not to be known by belief in, or acceptance of, any doctrines about Christ or God, but only by the actual experience of His regenerating life in the soul : that a historic or speculative belief is valueless if it is not the outcome of living and inward experience. It is in the following paragraph that Penington's special theory appears :

Now they distinguish, according to the Scriptures, between that which is called Christ and the bodily garment which he wore. The one was flesh, the other spirit. "The flesh profiteth nothing (saith he), the spirit quickeneth ; and he that eateth me shall live by me, even as I live by the Father," John vi. 63, 57. This is the manna itself, the true treasure ; the other but the visible or earthen vessel which held it. The body of flesh was but the veil, Heb. x. 20. The eternal life was the substance veiled. The one he did partake of, as the rest of the children did ; the other was he which did partake thereof, Heb. ii. 14. The one was the body which was prepared for the life, for it to appear in, and be made manifest, Heb. x. 5. The other was the life or light itself, for whom the body was prepared, who took it up, appeared in it to do the will, Psalm xl. 7, 8, and was made manifest to those eyes which were able to see through the veil wherewith it was covered, John i. 14.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Isaac Penington* (Edn. 1784), Vol. I., p. 360.

This theory of the person of Christ runs all through Isaac Penington's voluminous writings. He divides in the sharpest way between the Eternal Divine and saving Spirit, known in the heart, who is properly called "Christ," and the human body of the man of Nazareth, in which for a time He, the true Christ, was clothed and manifested.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he writes :

The Scriptures do expressly distinguish between Christ and the garment which he wore; between him that came, and the body in which he came; between the substance that was veiled, and the veil which veiled it. "Lo! I come; a body hast thou prepared for me." There is plainly he, and the body in which he came. There was the outward vessel, and the inward life. This we certainly know, and can never call the bodily garment Christ, but that which appeared and dwelt in the body. (From *An Invitation to Professors*, etc., *Works*, Vol. III., p. 61.)

Again, he writes :

To whom do the names and titles Jesus and Christ chiefly and in the first place belong? Do they belong to the body which was taken by him, or to him who took the body? The body hath its nature and properties; and the Eternal Word or Son of God (the pure spotless lamb, the fountain of innocency) its nature and properties. Now the query is, which was the appointed Saviour of the Father? Which was the anointed of the Father, chiefly and in the first place? Whether the body prepared, or he for whom the body was prepared, to do the will, and offer up the acceptable sacrifice in? (From *Some Queries concerning Christ and His Appearances*, *Works*, Vol. III., p. 46).

If we ask what was the origin of this sharply dualistic theory, which makes the Spirit that was in Jesus Divine, and His body human, the answer is that it seems to have been reached by Isaac Penington himself. I have not been able to discover, though I have made careful enquiry, that it was held before him by other mystics or sectaries of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> The only seventeenth century writer, so far as I have ascertained, who uses this passage from *Hebrews* in the same way as Penington, without (apparently) having been influenced by him, is William Bayly, the Quaker sea-captain, who, in his "short Discovery of the State of Man," dated 24th of Fourth Month, 1659, a few months only after Penington's convincement, writes :

"The power that was in that Man (or Body), which suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, was before the Body or Creature was made ; and it was the Power of the most High which overshadowed the Virgin ; and, said he, *A Body hast thou prepared me* ; (mark) this was the Life and Power in the Body which spoke, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt."

When James Nayler was before the justices at Appleby in 1653, a question was asked him which, we may be fairly certain, would have been answered in Penington's manner had Nayler been familiar with that doctrine :

"*Question* : Was Christ man, or no ?

"*James*. Yes, he was, and took upon him the seed of Abraham, and was real flesh and bone ; but [it] is a mystery not known to the carnal man ; for he is begotten of the immortal seed, and those that know him know him to be spiritual ; for it was the word that became flesh and dwelt among us ; and if he had not been spiritual he had not wrought my redemption.



has some kinship with the Docetic doctrines of the early Christian centuries, with their sharp separation between spirit and matter, to the detriment of the latter—doctrines which the religious instinct of teachers like Ignatius and Irenæus rejected, and which became known as “heresies.” Undoubtedly Penington believed himself to be in harmony with the real teaching of the New Testament, yet his theory seems to be based on a single text in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “a body hast thou prepared for me” (Heb. vi. 6), which a little reflection might have assured him was a very insecure foundation. For that text is nothing but a mistranslation, or perhaps a misinterpretation by the LXX translators, of a passage in the Psalms which no one can suppose to contain any reference to Christ at all. The passage is Ps. xl. 6-8 :

Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in ; mine ears hast thou opened ; burnt offering and sin offering has thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I am come ; in the roll of the book it is written of me : I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart.

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“ *Justice Pearson* : Is Christ in thee as man ?

“ *James* : Christ filleth all places and is not divided ; *separate God and man, and he is no more Christ.*” From *Saul's Errand to Damascus* (1653), p. 31.

The words "mine ears hast thou opened" are plainly the Psalmist's declaration that God had led him to perceive the uselessness of outward sacrifice as compared with the inward sacrifice of the heart and life. They mean, in the original Hebrew, *ears hast thou bored for me*; and the Septuagint translators interpreted it to mean, or more probably a careless copyist rendered it as, *a body hast thou prepared for me*. The author of *Hebrews* found this in his copy of the Psalms in Greek, and gave it a Messianic significance. So that it is not Penington alone that is to be credited with the misunderstanding; though a reference to the original passage in the Psalms would surely have shown him that he was pressing this single expression far beyond what it would really bear.

It is hardly too much to say that some of the greatest troubles and disasters through which the Society of Friends has passed were caused by this theory, based on an erroneous Greek text.

James Nayler (in his answers at Appleby, quoted in the footnote on pp. 36, 37), showed a better insight into the problem than any of the other early Friends. If they had followed these

lines, had fixed their thoughts, as Nayler did, on the Fourth Gospel, instead of the mistranslated passage in Hebrews, and had taken heed to the caution, "Separate God and man and he is no more Christ," the history of the Society of Friends might have been very different.

## V.

## ISAAC PENINGTON'S SUCCESSORS.

The ablest (in many ways) of Isaac Penington's successors, though he can hardly be called a clear or logical thinker, was his intimate friend and neighbour, the statesman William Penn. "Convinced" by the preaching of Thomas Loe, in Ireland, in 1667, he was in the next year committed to the Tower for the supposed heresy of his book *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, in which he attacked the doctrines of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and of the Atonement understood as a substitutionary satisfaction of the wrath of God. After a short confinement he was released, having made clear the fundamental orthodoxy of his position by writing *Innocency with her Open Face*. In this book he gives

emphatic statements, mostly in Scriptural language, of his belief in the Deity and Incarnation of Jesus Christ, while maintaining that He *is* (in His resurrection life) the same as the Holy Spirit, "a manifestation whereof is given to every man to profit withal."<sup>1</sup>

In his *Serious Apology for the Principles and Practices of the People called Quakers*<sup>2</sup> (1671) he replies to the charge that the Quakers denied "the Person (the Son of God) who died at Jerusalem to be our Redeemer." It will be seen that he uses almost exactly the language of Penington, sharply dividing the Divine from the human in Jesus Christ, and identifying the human element with His body :

Which most horrid imputation has been answered (I believe) more than a thousand times, by declaring that he that laid down his life and suffered his body to be crucified by the Jews, is Christ the only Son of the Most High God. But that the outward person which suffered was properly the Son of God, we utterly deny. . . . *A Body hast thou prepared me*, said the Son. Then the Son was not the Body, though the Body was the Son's.

It will be seen from this, and from other extracts in the Appendix, that neither Penington nor

<sup>1</sup> See *Works*, Ed. 1726, Vol. I., p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, Vol. II., p. 32.

Penn ever meant to depreciate the person or work of Jesus of Nazareth, still less to deny His historical reality. And the same is true of all the early Friends, if we except a few careless utterances of some of the less thoughtful adherents of the new teaching, which were made the most of by their enemies.

The most learned of the Friends of the second generation was the young Robert Barclay, who in 1675, at the early age of twenty-eight, published his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*. In this book, which became for some hundred and fifty years the chief standard of Quaker orthodoxy, he deals only incidentally with the problem of Christology. His statements are carefully worded. "Christ," he says, "is fitly called the Mediator betwixt God and men ; for having been with God from all eternity, being himself God, and also in time partaking of the nature of man, through Him is the goodness and love of God conveyed to mankind." Combating the objection that the Quaker doctrine of the indwelling Light made Christians the equals of Christ Himself, he says :

Though we affirm that Christ dwells in us, yet not immediately, but mediately, as he is in that *seed* which is

in us,<sup>1</sup>; whereas he, to wit, the *Eternal Word*, which was with God, and was God, dwelt immediately in that holy man. He then is as the head, and we as the members; he the vine, and we the branches. . . . We also freely reject the heresy of Apollinarius, who denied him to have any [human] soul, but said the body was only actuated by the Godhead. As also the error of Eutyches, who made the manhood to be wholly swallowed up of the Godhead. Wherefore, as we believe he was a true and real man, so we also believe that he continues so to be glorified in the heavens in soul and body, by whom God shall judge the world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barclay has previously endeavoured to explain this by using the scholastic term *Vehiculum Dei*, for "the spiritual body of Christ, on which the saints do feed," but he does not succeed in making his thought at all clear. (*Apology*, Prop. v., vi., § 13). He is hampered by an inadequate idea of Personality.

<sup>2</sup> The influence of Penington's peculiar doctrine appears where he is discussing "the body and blood of Christ," specially in reference to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He insists, of course, that the "body" of which the disciples were to partake is spiritual and not outward, and distinguishes it from "that body or temple of Jesus Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary, and in which He walked, lived and suffered in the land of Judæa."

"Now as the outward body and temple was called Christ, so was also his spiritual body no less properly, and that long before that outward body was in being. . . . Which spiritual body of Christ, though it was the saving food of the righteous both before the law and under the law, yet under the law it was veiled and shadowed, and covered under divers types, ceremonies, and observations; yea, and not only so, but it was veiled and hid, in some respect, under the outward temple and body of Christ, or during the continuance of it; so that the Jews could not understand Christ's preaching about it while on earth." (*Apology*, Prop. XIII., § 2).

## VI.

## LATER CONTROVERSIES.

Barclay is much more careful than Penington ; he writes more as a theologian, less as a seer and mystic. Had the other Friends been equally cautious, the edge would have been taken from many of the attacks that were made upon them. Most of these turn on unguarded statements, which, when read apart from their context, often have a harsh and uncouth sound, but when carefully examined, in the light of the main thought and experience of the Quaker preachers and writers, are seen to be much less unorthodox than they appear.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, when the Quakers had won toleration and had become a formidable element in English society, menacing the organized forms of Christianity, both established and free, there was a violent outbreak of polemic against them. To a large extent this was directed to show that their doctrine of Christ denied at once His humanity

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B, page 86.

and His divinity, and made Him nothing but a vague impersonal principle that all men shared ; and that Quakerism, therefore, was an anti-Christian religion.

It was still more serious when men who had been Quakers turned against their friends, and joined with their opponents in endeavouring to prove them unbelievers. Chief among these "apostates" were Francis Bugg and George Keith, whose polemics are briefly noticed in the Appendix.<sup>1</sup>

One of the main objects of Keith's attacks was the elderly but still active Friend, George Whitehead, who, after the death of Fox, in 1691, had held the foremost place in maintaining the Quaker position in London. He was a man of sane mind and saintly temper, modest and careful in his statements, and he issued voluminous replies to the attacks made on Friends by Bugg, Keith and others. He drew up at different times several confessions of faith, the most noteworthy of which was issued in 1693, to clear Friends of the charges made against them by Keith. The declaration that the Quakers hold to Christ as the Light given in measure to all men is set side by side with their affirmation of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C., page 89.



entire belief in the historic record in the Scriptures and in Evangelical Christianity generally, with little attempt to show how the two can be united. The Mystical and Evangelical elements in Quaker teaching—the inward and the historic sides of Christian faith—are carefully brought together, but imperfectly harmonised. Whitehead and his friends who signed the Declaration of Faith did not “esteem it necessary to make themselves wise above what is written,” and were quite willing to leave the matter there.<sup>1</sup>

Many of George Whitehead’s abundant writings are directed to explaining the passages in the writings of Penington and others which had been objected to as heretical. For instance, answering F. Bugg in *The Counterfeit Convert* (1694), he takes Penington’s doctrine of the “body” of Christ as a garment or veil, and says Penington only meant that the bodily garment was not *chiefly or in the first place* Christ. This, he adds :

is no proof that the Quakers deny Jesus to be Christ, for he did not consist only of an outward body or vessel, he had both inward life, soul and spirit, even as perfect man, much more as God. And therefore

<sup>1</sup> The Declaration is printed in full in Sewel’s *History of the Quakers*, Vol. II., pp. 542-555.

F. Bugg's inference that the Quakers would divide the humanity from the Godhead, is false; they are distinguished but not divided in the entire being of Christ.

A similar line to that of Whitehead was taken by Dr. Daniel Phillips, who in 1702 published *Vindiciæ Veritatis*, to defend the Quakers from some "Seasonable Advice" that had been offered them by Dr. John Stillingfleet. Phillips admits that "several of our ancient Friends' expressions are, without considering their context, harsh, and may be construed in a sense which we dislike as much as our opposers can." But he does not believe that any passage needs to be retracted; he is sure that all are capable of "orthodox interpretations." Dealing with the familiar charge that the Quakers "will not allow Christ Jesus to have now a human body in heaven," he says:

It is our faith that the same man Christ Jesus that died without the gates of Jersalem is now in heaven, with the same body—so far as a natural and spiritual, terrestrial and celestial [body] can be the same; . . . but we cannot admit that *human* is a proper epithet for *celestial* body.

He goes on to enquire, as a medical man, what a "human" body really is, and concludes that it can only be a material one. Stillingfleet's heaviest charge was based on William Penn's

statement : " That the outward Person which suffered was properly the Son of God, we utterly deny."<sup>1</sup> After a careful enquiry into the meaning of the words, Phillips concludes (as also Penn himself declares, in the preface to the book) that what was intended was the denial that *God Himself* died on the Cross—a " heresy " known by the technical name of Patripassianism, and held at that time by Lodowick Muggleton. He also offers an interesting explanation of Penington's oft-quoted passage about " not calling the bodily garment Christ ": that Isaac Penington was combating views attributed to the Socinians, " as if the manhood of Christ that was born of the Virgin, excluding the Eternal Word, was the only and the whole Christ." It will be seen that Phillips, while admitting that such expressions were not sufficiently guarded, shows (and I think successfully) that the authors of them were sincerely endeavouring to combat serious errors.

<sup>1</sup> See page 40.

## VII.

CRITICISM OF THE EARLY QUAKER  
CHRISTOLOGY.

Whitehead and Phillips, the former especially, did very useful work in mediating between extremes, and faithfully presenting the two elements, the mystical and the evangelical, that were both present, though imperfectly combined, in the early Quaker thought. The later years of the seventeenth century did not produce men of great original power or insight, and the double strain of teaching flowed through these Apologists unresolved.

It seems needful at this point to dwell a little on this early Quaker teaching, and to show where its weakness lay. I wish at once to express sympathy with the objection that it is something like a desecration to take the glowing utterances of the saints and mystics, and subject them to the cold criticism of the philosopher or theologian. We must always remember that the Friends of the first generation spoke and wrote out of the white heat of a most living experience of reality, and their words should be read with the sympathetic insight with which

we judge the poets, rather than the cool analysis which we apply to theological arguments.

But all of us have a philosophy of some kind latent in our minds—a framework of general ideas into which our experiences are unconsciously fitted, and in accordance with which they find expression in our words. And the early Friends were no exceptions. They inherited a “dualistic” mode of thought which sharply divided the world of matter from that of spirit, the natural from the supernatural, the human from the Divine. Everything fell into one or other of those categories of thought, which were regarded as mutually exclusive. The thought of Divine “immanence,” which was strong in the early days of Christianity, and to which we are now returning, had little if any place in their minds. They could not think of a “natural” world which was at the same time spiritual or supernatural; for them the two orders of being could not overlap and interpenetrate one another. They missed the real significance of the Johannine doctrine of the Logos: that God and man have something in common: that there is no chasm between them except that which sin has caused: that man at his best can be a real manifestation of God, and

that God has that in Him which can find real and true expression in a perfect man.

They did their best to explain, by the help of the framework of ideas they had inherited, the rich and living experiences into which they had entered: that God was close to them, saving, cleansing, inspiring and guiding them, and that this experience was in some way connected with the personality and work of Jesus Christ. Few of them seem to have felt the need to explain *how* it was connected, or to probe the mystery of Christ's nature; but those who did feel it had recourse to the theory of the "prepared body," which means that while His body was human His spirit was Divine: that the true Christ was the living eternal Spirit whom they felt inspiring them, who had entered for a brief period the body of the man Jesus, but was no more really identified with His "outward person" than a man is identified with his garments.

Now, it should be clear at once that this doctrine, strictly considered, does not save the real humanity of Jesus Christ. It is, as I have suggested before, akin to the "Docetic" heresies. So far the opponents of Penington, obtuse and unsympathetic as most of them

were, seem to have been in the right. A real man or "person" is much more than a material body. A man or person is a self-conscious being, who feels and thinks and wills: he is essentially a mind, or soul, or "ego," of which his body is the organ. The connection between mind and body, in a self-conscious person, is indeed a mystery we cannot fathom; but it is much closer than is indicated by such terms as "entering," "inhabiting," "clothing itself with," and the like, which the early Friends used. It would be unfair to blame them for their defective psychology, but we must recognise that it *was* defective. And it should be noted that they have hardly a word to say about the *mind* of Jesus, which, if the Incarnation is to be taken seriously, must have been a human mind. They rarely dwell on the growth of His knowledge, on His consciousness of Himself as a man distinct from God and wholly dependent on Him, on His use of prayer, His experience of temptation, His struggle—deep and intense, though always victorious—to know and do the will of His Father in heaven. They have little to say about His thoughts of the Messiahship and what it meant, His anticipation of the coming Kingdom, His anxiety to train His disciples

sufficiently to enable them to carry on His work when He should be taken from them, His suffering and desolation in the prospect of death.

This absence of insight into the human mind or self-consciousness of Jesus, of realisation of His character and personality as a man, was universal in their day, as indeed it had been since the first century (except among the Nestorians); and the Friends did not, in this matter, diligent students as they were of the New Testament, rise above the common level of their time. We must, I think, regretfully admit that they hindered rather than helped the attainment of such insight, by their intense insistence on the inward and spiritual nature of "Christ,"—which (given their rigid separation of the spiritual from the material) led them, however unconsciously and unintentionally, to a relative disparagement of the outward and historical facts of the Incarnation. This, their successors, towards the close of the seventeenth century, tried to make good by stating with the utmost explicitness their acceptance of the New Testament story ; but (as we have seen) the two elements were never clearly harmonised.

Their defective thoughts of Personality, which most of them seem never to have been



able to think of apart from bodily form, also led them to an impersonal way of speaking of the inward "Christ." Daniel Phillips admits that the Friends objected to "attributing *Personality* to God, conceiving it too gross a term to be predicated of the Almighty." "Persons" were for them rigidly separate beings. They could not conceive that one "person" could overlap or interpenetrate with another; and hence that which they felt stirring in them, purifying and enlightening and guiding, they were obliged to speak of as a thing or principle rather than a Person. "*That* of God in you" was what they would direct their hearers to. This mode of speech was not that of primitive Christianity, and it afterwards led to serious consequences.

## VIII.

### THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: JOB SCOTT.

During the eighteenth century the Quaker movement in this country, from causes which it is beyond our province to consider at large, but one of which I believe to have been their weakness in theology, rapidly declined. In

the American Colonies it made much greater numerical progress, and it seemed at one time as though Quakerism might have become the dominant form of Christianity in more than one of those communities. But on both sides of the Atlantic there was a lamentable decline in spiritual life—as indeed there was in all the Churches until they were awakened to new zeal by the Methodist revival. There is only one name of importance for our present study among the Friends of the eighteenth century—that of Job Scott, a Rhode Island schoolmaster, who joined the Society “by conviction” about the year 1770.

Job Scott was a man of saintly life, combined with much force of mind and fearlessness in original thinking on religious subjects. He travelled extensively in the ministry, and his *Journal* is full of instruction. In 1793 he came on a religious visit to this country, and died of small-pox in the North of Ireland at the early age of forty-two, as John Woolman had died at York nineteen years before. His views were as far removed as those of Penington from the prevailing orthodoxy of the churches of his time, but they encountered no breath of censure in the Society of Friends on either side of the

Atlantic, until, more than thirty years after his death, they were attacked as unsound by Luke Howard, of Tottenham, in 1825.<sup>1</sup>

Job Scott's position in regard to the nature and work of Jesus Christ was substantially that of Isaac Penington and William Penn. He constantly uses in the same way the expression about "the prepared body," but manifests a deeper insight into the humanity of Jesus, and the influence of His personality on those who came in contact with it. He dwells much on the sufferings of Jesus, which he feels he shares, as George Fox did. "How the divine life unites itself with humanity so as to be capable of suffering" he wisely professed himself unable to explain<sup>2</sup>; and, if at any time he did make the attempt, he fell into the usual dualistic mode of expression which was based on the idea that the true Christ, being pure Spirit, could not suffer.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Job Scott, an Eighteenth Century Friend*, by Henry W. Wilbur, pp. 85-94. Luke Howard left the Society of Friends shortly after the "Beacon" controversy of 1835-6, having identified himself with the party of Isaac Crewdson.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 499 (Essay on "Salvation by Christ").

<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 281. "Not but that his omniscience as God could see and behold it all [the suffering on the Cross] without feeling it in a body of flesh; but as the brethren were partakers of flesh and blood, he willingly took part of the same."

But such criticism must not blind us to the depth and power of his apprehension of Christ and of fellowship with Him.

Some may call me an heretic when I confess unto them that I expect no final benefit from the death of Jesus, in any other way than through fellowship with him in his sufferings. But after the way in which they call heresy, worship I the God of my fathers, truly believing in the history of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension and glory.<sup>1</sup>

But Job Scott's chief contribution to Christian thought was a reinforcement of the Quaker teaching that salvation by Christ is no kind of external imputation, but must, if it is to be real at all, be experienced as an actual birth of the Divine in the human soul. This he insists on throughout his writings, as the chief thing he has to say; and he enforces it by treating the metaphor of a "new birth" as much more than a metaphor—as literally expressing the experience that all who are "saved" must pass through. *Christ*, he thought, must actually be born in each believer: God is His Father, and the believer is His mother. To emphasize this thought he presses beyond what they will bear such passages as Mark iii. 35, "Whosoever shall

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 221.

do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother," and Paul's expression to the Galatians (iv. 19), "until Christ be formed in you." This birth of the Divine in the human soul seems to him to be a part of the Incarnation itself :

In all ages, the true mystery of godliness was and is " God manifest in the flesh," etc., not in the flesh of that one body that was born of Mary, only ; but in the flesh of all the godly. For there never was any true godliness without the manifestation of the very life and power of God in the creature, bringing forth a *new birth* of " the incorruptible seed and word of God."<sup>1</sup>

From all this it is evident that Job Scott, like Isaac Penington, was a typical mystic ; he realised more deeply the inward than the historic side of Christian faith ; but he was one who lived out with rare faithfulness the life to which God had called him, and he always knew that this life was his through Jesus Christ. Many of his expressions are strikingly beautiful. In his first letter written to Eunice Anthony, at the age of twenty-nine, after he had asked her to be his wife, he says, " it is my crown, my chiefest joy, to feel the holy harmonious influences and inshinings of the love of Jesus my

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 443.

Saviour upon my soul." In 1782, at the crisis of the War of Independence, he wrote :

Though storms without arise,  
Emblems of those within,  
On Christ my soul relies,  
The sacrifice for sin.

Though clamour rear its head,  
And stalk from shore to shore,  
My food is angel's bread—  
What can I covet more ?

## IX.

### ELIAS HICKS AND THE SEPARATION OF 1827-8.

I now approach, with considerable hesitation, a very difficult part of my task—that of endeavouring to give a brief but faithful account of the Christological doctrines of Elias Hicks, which were the immediate occasion of the most disastrous event in the history of the Society of Friends. The Separation which took place in America in 1827-8<sup>1</sup> laid waste the Society on that side of the Atlantic, almost destroying its corporate witness for spiritual Christianity,

<sup>1</sup> See my *Separations, their Causes and Effects* (Headley Bros., 1914, 1s. net), pp. 16-49.

and the reports of it which reached this country produced much confusion in the minds of Friends.

Elias Hicks was three years older than Job Scott, and, like him, travelled extensively in the ministry in Eastern America. He was a farmer of Long Island, and a man of limited education though of great natural abilities, and an acute and logical mind. He was an eloquent and powerful preacher, and where he laboured longest he found the most devoted following. Not until he was past sixty years of age do we find evidences of disagreement with his ministry. The earliest reference I have been able to find is in the life of Stephen Grellet, who mentions the great uneasiness he felt in regard to some of Hicks's utterances in the year 1808. It seems to have been ten or fifteen years later that opposition first began to be shown in public.

The *Journal* of Elias Hicks is a singularly colourless document, and it contains very little indeed that might not have been written by any Friend who travelled extensively in the ministry during the later years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next. It is evident that he was a fervent preacher of righteousness, taking a strong line against slavery and on all

moral questions. In doctrine, he followed what he believed to be the teaching of the early Friends, exalting the sufficiency of the Inward Light, and using almost the language of Job Scott in insisting on the necessity of "Christ being born in you"—of an actual experience of the saving power of God's Spirit in the soul. It was certainly this, and no "mere morality" or self-righteousness that he taught. He disavows the Unitarian doctrine, and expresses his deep sorrow at the spread, even among Friends, of deistic and "infidel" ideas.

After he had been openly attacked as "unsound" great crowds of Friends and others frequently gathered to hear him, and many of his sermons were taken down in shorthand, and published, with his sanction though without being revised by himself. It is from these volumes, covering (it must be remembered) only the later years of his life, when controversy seems to have rendered him more extreme, that our knowledge of his peculiar views is chiefly to be gained. Through them all runs strongly the flow of the preacher of righteousness. Fond as he was of argument, there is little or nothing to show that he indulged in speculation or controversy for its own sake ; and, though he combats



strongly what he believes to be error, it is always without rancour, and because he sees in it some moral flaw or unreality.<sup>1</sup>

I believe it to be quite unjust to say, as has often been said, that Hicks consciously or intentionally denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ. But he understood it in his own peculiar way, which he fully believed to be the way the early Friends had understood it. In some passages, however, he explains it in a manner which I have not found exemplified in their writings. For example, in a carefully written letter he says<sup>2</sup> :

As to the divinity of Jesus Christ, the son of the virgin : when he had arrived to a full state of sonship in the spiritual generation, he was wholly swallowed up into the divinity of his heavenly Father [here he refers to 2 Peter i. 4, " partakers of the Divine nature,"] and was one with the Father, with only this difference : his Father's divinity was underived, being self-existent, but the Son's divinity was altogether derived from the Father. . . . But this was not the case with Jesus in the spiritual relation, until he had gone through the last institute of the law dispensation, *viz.*, John's watery baptism, and had received additional power from on high, by the descending of the Holy Ghost upon him as he came out of the water.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D., page 94.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted at length in *The Quaker*, vol. IV., p. 284, See also *Sermons*, pp. 254ff.

<sup>3</sup> This view of the taking up of the manhood of Jesus

So also, I do not believe that Elias Hicks had any thought of denying the Incarnation or the humanity of Jesus Christ ; but the outcome of his mode of thought, which (as we have seen) he inherited from some of the early Friends and carried to an extreme, is undoubtedly to belittle the importance of the historic side of Christian faith, by concentrating attention on the inward and the spiritual. For instance, dealing with our Lord's miracles, he says :

Here he became an outward figure of the power of the gospel, the wisdom and power of God. Here he is acting upon the outward man ; by healing the sick, cleansing the leper, and raising the dead ; it is all figure together. Therefore, he told his disciples, " It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." He speaks nothing but the truth : for so long as the Jews had him to look at, they never could rise any higher,—while he was bodily with them. That part must be entirely taken away. It must be dissolved, and be so no more. We must have no remembrance of it ; because, if we did worship

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into God is technically known as " Adoptionism," and, though not considered orthodox, has been held at various times in the history of the Church from the first century onwards. It calls attention to an experience of our Lord which has been too much neglected in Christian thought : the fuller consciousness of His Divine mission, and of power to fulfil it, which came to Him after His baptism. The idea of a " progressive Incarnation," to which it is allied, has been held by some theologians who have been counted orthodox *e.g.*, Dörner.

it, it would be the worship of an image. Let us only remember the glorious works which he did ; but no more remember the flesh and blood. Let us have no hand in it. It was only an organ through which the power of God passed, and brought about all these effects ; effects supernatural to the power of man ; to any ability or power of his own.<sup>1</sup>

That passage is, I believe, typical of his whole position, and the least we can say about it is that, while it was certainly meant to be Christian and spiritual, it does not ring true to Christian experience. It was not so that Jesus brought inward healing to the woman who was a sinner, who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. Such a doctrine, moreover, empties of real significance the thought of Paul, which filled him with adoring gratitude, that though the Lord " was rich, yet for your sake he became poor " ; that while equality with God was within His grasp, He " emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

At this point, I think, we may suitably leave Elias Hicks, and pass to the great reaction against mysticism which occurred in England, and changed the face of Quakerism here.

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons*, p. 261.

## X.

## THE GREAT REACTION: JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

The uprising of "Evangelicalism," which was largely the outcome of the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century, produced a new tide of spiritual life in most of the churches of this country, including the Society of Friends. In our own body it was aided by the labours of Stephen Grellet, the young Frenchman who, in 1795, had, on Long Island, undergone a very remarkable conversion (so far as appears, without human instrumentality) from Voltairean unbelief to Christianity of a markedly Evangelical type, and who had joined the Society of Friends. He was, as we have noted already, a strong opponent of Elias Hicks, whose views appeared to him to be mere deism and infidelity, and he had witnessed many of the desolating scenes that accompanied the Separation. His fervent and self-sacrificing missionary labours in many parts of the world, and the very deep Christian experience of which they were the outcome, gave great weight to his preaching, and I cannot doubt that he was largely instrumental in altering the views of Friends on both sides of the Atlantic. He paid

four visits to these islands—in 1811-13, in 1820, in 1831-2, and again, after his return from the Continent, in 1833-4.

The most noteworthy symptom of the new movement was the publication, in 1835, of *A Beacon to the Society of Friends*, by Isaac Crewdson, of Manchester. Into the history of the controversy it aroused it is beyond our scope to enter. Crewdson's main contention was that the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the source of our knowledge of God and His salvation, the only standard of Christian truth ; and that the origin of Hicks's errors, which, he believed, endangered the eternal salvation of men, lay in supposing that "impressions on the human mind" could be superior to the Bible. He charges Hicks with denying the divinity of Christ and His Atonement, and refutes him by quoting many passages of Scripture. His position is almost precisely that of the Puritan opponents of Quakerism in the seventeenth century, and of Francis Bugg and George Keith after their apostasy, and the whole doctrine of the "Inward Light" he denounces as a dangerous delusion. As, however, he makes no positive contribution to Christological thought, it is needless to devote further attention to his work.

A postscript to the book refers the reader to Joseph John Gurney's *Essays on Christianity*, to which, with other writings by this Friend, we now turn.

Joseph John Gurney<sup>†</sup> was one of the very few great Biblical scholars whom the Society of Friends has produced. In early life he mastered the Greek and Hebrew languages, and as years went on he read widely in the Fathers, and in Biblical criticism as it then was. But he was very far from being a clear and consistent thinker on religious subjects; indeed his views on Authority gave little scope for free and independent thought, like that of Job Scott. Brought up in worldly surroundings, with his sisters, one of whom was afterwards Elizabeth Fry, he turned like her, though without any sudden conversion, to the "plain path" of Quakerism. He was wealthy, genial and popular, and had a large acquaintance with leading people of various denominations, particularly Evangelical Churchmen. He was a man of very deep and sincere piety, and alike by his writings and public addresses and preaching he exercised a very wide influence. Though he had, after some early misgivings, thrown in his lot whole-heartedly with our Society, he never

<sup>†</sup> See my *Separations*, etc., chapters v. and vii.

understood the deep strain of mysticism which marks the teaching of the Early Friends, and indeed he frequently condemned all "mysticism" as near akin to infidelity. His *Essays on the Evidences, Doctrines and Practical Operation of Christianity* were first published in 1825, and went through many editions. I have read them carefully, without finding any trace of the distinctively Quaker spirit. They might have been written by any learned and devout evangelical Christian at that day, of any denomination. The argument to show "the truth of Christianity" is directed to proving the absolute and infallible authority of Scripture, and it was on this ground that Gurney always stood. Revelation he defines as "the introduction into the world of divinely authorised *knowledge*."<sup>1</sup> Christianity for him was mainly a system of *truths*, promulgated to men on the authority of God Himself, and vouched for by miracles.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Essays*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Letter to a Friend* (1824): "Christianity, then, being the religion of God—the true and only religion—where are we to find an authorised record of the doctrines of which it consists? I answer, not in the scholastic productions of polemical divines; not in the treatises of modern and uninspired theologians; not in the declarations of any particular church; but in the genuine compositions of inspired men: in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament" (p. 24).

Faith, saving faith, was for Gurney just what it was for the Puritan theologians who attacked the Quakers without really understanding their meaning: it was an *assent to propositions* given on Divine authority. He explicitly identified it with belief, and made our eternal salvation depend on the holding of certain views.<sup>1</sup> This was certainly a retrogression from the view of Barclay and his predecessors, for whom Faith was the response of our souls to the inward and immediate revelation of God.<sup>2</sup>

In many passages in his writings J. J. Gurney exposes what seems to him the danger of Hicks's position; but I do not think he traces it exactly to its right source. The mistake that led to a depreciation of the historic element in Christian faith appears, as I have indicated, to have been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Biblical Notes and Dissertations* (1830), chapter on "The Importance of Faith in the Deity of Christ": "Since it has been demonstrated to our reason that God has revealed to us a system of truth for our salvation, reason itself proclaims that we must be saved through the operation of that principle in the mind by which alone revealed truth is accepted and appropriated. Now that principle is *belief* or faith." It is fair to add, however, that in a later work Gurney denies that faith is "the *mere* assent of our understanding," and says, "it is a practical and operative principle of wonderful energy." (*Observations on the Distinguishing Views of Friends*, Seventh ed., 1834, p. 46.)

<sup>2</sup> Barclay, *Apology*, Prop. II., § 8. For a discussion of Gurney's *Essays*, see Appendix E., page 96.



twofold: first, a dualism that divided too sharply between the material and spiritual, the human and the Divine; and second, a defective idea of Personality. These limitations, inherited from the early Friends, affected the doctrine of Elias Hicks more seriously than it did theirs, both because he was more logical, and because he was further removed from the great uprising of spiritual life in which the Quaker movement began. But Gurney himself shared those limitations, and he added others of his own which, I am afraid, greatly lessened the influence for good which in many ways he exerted over the Society of Friends in this country. To enter at large into this subject would be beyond our range; but to prevent misconception I think it right to say that in my judgment his teaching and influence, the outcome as it was of deep and devoted Christian character, aroused new spiritual life and a richer evangelical experience in many Friends, stirred them to a far deeper sense of the value of the Bible and the importance of Biblical instruction, and helped to free the Society from the stiffness and traditionalism which was keeping it in bondage. It seems certain that no other Friend stamped his personality on the Society in this country during the

nineteenth century as Gurney did. From the time of the *Beacon* controversy onwards, most of its official utterances expressed his thoughts, often almost in his words; and many Friends who knew him only indirectly, or not at all, grew up into something like his image.

Among his limitations, however, must be reckoned a constitutional incapacity to grasp the meaning of the mystical element in the teaching of the early Friends, and, behind them, in early Christianity itself. He based himself absolutely on the Bible; but he overlooked almost entirely one of the most deep and vital elements in the New Testament—the mystical teaching of Paul and John in regard to the actual indwelling of Christ in the Christian soul. “Christ liveth in me” —“Christ in you, the hope of glory” —“I am the vine, ye are the branches” —“If we love one another, God abideth in us” —this is the language of the deepest Christian experience, but Gurney either barely notices it, or else explains it away. He was learned in patristic lore; but there is no sign that the deep mysticism of the early Greek Fathers touched him in the least.

The result is that since his time the Society of Friends, the world over, has been speaking

with two voices, and has had no clear and ringing message for the world as it had in its early days. Most of us, in our devotion to doctrine and the historic side of faith, have been in danger of losing the inward Christ, and with this the heart of Quakerism ; a minority have maintained the latter, but (for the most part) without the large outlook and the missionary spirit that marked our founders, and which seems to require, as its inspiring force, a devotion—not to doctrine or tradition—but to the person of the historic Jesus as the Redeemer and Healer of men.

## XI.

### CONCLUSION.

The greatest of the problems that confronts the Society of Friends to-day—so at least it appears to me—is the reunion, in the bonds of clear thought and living experience, of the outward and the spiritual elements in our faith, of the historic and the inward Christ. It is, I believe, idle to ask which of the two elements is the more important. Unless the two are harmonised and held together, we can no more do our real work for the world than we can cut with one blade of

a pair of scissors. Without the historic Jesus as the Revealer of the Father and the Redeemer of our souls, we shall be little more than an ethical society of a few select spirits, alienated from the great heart of Christendom, and following (it may be) wandering fires. What He was to His first followers, what He has ever been to the Christian society, was powerfully portrayed two years ago, in this lecture, by T. R. Glover, and it is needless now to repeat it. But, on the other hand, without a deep experience, and a firm conviction, of the inward Christ—both in His perennial influence in the heart of all mankind, as the Divine Word who is the Light and Life of men, and in His more personal presence as the Holy Spirit in the souls of His redeemed and faithful followers—we shall be a mere evangelical sect, with no reason for our existence, no living message for the troubled and seeking souls around us; for the multitudes in countries like France and Germany, as well as at home, who are alienated from the Churches; or for the millions in India for whom religion is mystical or nothing.

The task of seeking for a thought of Christ which will unite these two elements is one that is worthy of the dedication of our best powers

of heart and soul and mind. We cannot indeed all think alike, and it would not be well for us if we could. Some are natural mystics, many are not. But there is an urgent need that some of us at least—those especially who have gifts of intellect and education—should devote these gifts, according to their ability, to the earnest endeavour, by prayerful thought and wide and earnest study, to master the truth of our religion and express it in harmony with the thought and knowledge of our time. I appeal to the young men and women among us—those especially who have the advantages of university training—to follow in the steps of Barclay and of Gurney in sparing a large part of their lives from the pursuit of business and pleasure, and to dedicate it, as they did, to religious study. Particularly I ask them to devote it to the endeavour to find an answer to this great question : how can the historic and the inward Christ be held as one ; how can that one Life, lived so long ago, be also the inward Light in the souls of all men, how can it be the hope of the world to-day, the well-spring of love and joy and power for service in Christian hearts ?

We do not want to seek a denominational answer ; to exalt ourselves as a people ; or harden

the sectarian divisions that are melting away as men faithfully seek the truth that unites them. We must recognise that this great question is being worthily attacked by the best thought of our day, in many lands, and by men and women representing all shades of Christian thought. What we have to do is to share their labours, and to learn if we may what is the contribution that we as a people have to offer, what it is that God has raised us up to do.

It is not for me to attempt to indicate the kind of answer we shall find. We need not be fettered in our search for it by the formulæ of the past, which indeed we ought to respect as danger-signals warning us against blind paths, but which must not bind us as if they had exhausted truth. So orthodox a student as Professor James Denney says :

It is faith which makes a Christian ; and when the Christian attitude of the soul is found, it must be free to raise its own problems and work out its own solutions. . . . We are bound to Christ, and would see all men so bound ; but we must leave it to Christ to establish His ascendancy over men in His own way—by the power of what He is and what He has done—and not seek to secure it beforehand by the imposition of chains of our forging.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 383.

But, though it will take long thought and study and much prayer and Christian experience, on the part of many of us, to find the answer, I may venture to offer a few hints as to the path along which it may be sought.

1. In the first place, we must come to terms with modern Science in its largest sense: we must show, if we can, that our theology does not contradict, but is in harmony with, what is known of the facts of the universe. Purely physical science—the study of “dead” matter and the forces that move it—may not have much to teach us; we must indeed be on our guard against the assumption, too often made, that the purely mechanical order of necessary and inevitable causation, which physical science seems to reveal to us, holds also of living things and of self-conscious personality. The work of Bergson and others in this field should claim our earnest attention. Biology, which now is based on belief in Evolution, is shaking itself free from the fetters of the mechanical theory, and is more and more reaching the conclusion that the free creative energy which manifests itself in the personal life of self-conscious beings is present in some measure in *all* life.<sup>1</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> See Bergson, *Creative Evolution*; also *Mechanism, Life and Personality*, by J. S. Haldane, F.R.S.

should consider carefully whether a sound view of Evolution really shuts the door against such an inflow into the world of creative moral energy such as Christians believe was associated with the personality of their Master ; whether the life He lived does not give us an assured conviction of the kind of goal for which Evolution is making, and so add a new significance to the words of Paul that “ *unto Him are all things* ” ; whether the personal freedom that Evolution, rightly studied, is compelled to recognise does not bring us also to the fact of Sin and the need of Redemption.

But there are other fields, not of Science strictly so called, in which we should yet carry with us the scientific spirit that seeks to hold only to what is true and verifiable. Our study of History and Criticism must be scientific, in the sense that we seek only for the facts, and for all the facts that can be known. We must not, in reliance on some *a priori* and impossible definition of the miraculous, rule out without investigation such alleged facts as seem to transcend the common order ; we must study them with an open mind. In particular, we shall concentrate our energies, as the best students in many lands have long been doing, on the historic



personality of our Lord : on His self-consciousness, so far as we may penetrate it ; on what He believed Himself to be, in relation to God and men ; on the impression He made on His disciples ; on the experience of God into which He raised them. Incidentally to this, of course, the New Testament itself must be read in the light of the best historical and literary criticism.<sup>1</sup> Further, the Comparative study of Religions should have our attention, that we may understand something of the resemblances as well as the differences between our own and other faiths, and see what each has to offer for the true life of man.

Especially we should recognise that the study of Psychology—that is, of human personality—though it has only as yet made a beginning, has already thrown much light on our difficulties. It has shown us that the real *person*, which each one of us is, is far larger than our *consciousness* : that there are abysmal depths in each of us, which we call the “sub-conscious” ; and that there may well have been depths beyond depths in the personality of Jesus Christ, depths of relation to God and to the whole of humanity,

<sup>1</sup> On the scientific study of history, see Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, chapters iv. and v.

which did not appear to others, and of which He Himself, in His humiliation, may have been only dimly and fitfully conscious. Also, psychology is teaching us more and more the fallacy of supposing that "persons" are as isolated from one another as are their bodies and their conscious lives : it is showing that our personality is essentially *conjunct* : that it is developed by the interpenetration, mainly in the sub-conscious region, of our own personality with that of others, and most of all by communion with the Universal Spirit. Consequently it removes altogether the ancient difficulty that in saying Christ is the "Light" or "Seed" in men we are reducing Him from a person to a principle.

2. But, while in these ways our search should be scientific, we must never forget the debt we owe to Ritschl and his followers especially—though in some respects they have been anticipated by men like Penington and Penn—for insisting that any religious doctrine, to be of value, must be the outcome, not of intellectual scrutiny merely, but of personal religious experience. Historically, it was the experience of the followers of Jesus—their outward experience of His life and teaching, death and

resurrection, and their inward experience of salvation through Him—that was the cause of the wonder as to who and what He was, out of which Christology arose.<sup>1</sup> And any attempts at speculative construction will be unhelpful, if they proceed without constant recognition of this ethical basis, on which alone any worthy Christology can be built up. We ourselves, if we are to take any part in the building, must be sharers in that experience, just as truly as, if we aspire to be artistic or literary critics, we must be able to enter into the soul of the painter and the poet. In other words, without the light of the Holy Spirit we shall accomplish nothing.

3. There is, indeed, a very real and long-recognised difficulty in combining these two attitudes of mind—the scientific and the religious. The scientific spirit urges us to be cold and critical; to weigh all evidence with the utmost care; to take nothing for granted that is not proved; to regulate the degree of our belief entirely by the strength of the evidence that is forthcoming. The religious spirit, on the other hand, urges us to “let ourselves go” in the warmth

<sup>1</sup> Among the followers of Ritschl a very high place should be given to W. Herrmann, whose book, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, must be studied.

of adoration ; it longs to believe everything ; it is utterly alien to the spirit of cautious investigation. Which of these two spirits should be ours in the study of the Person of our Lord ? Or how can we combine them both ? This is a large and very difficult question, and I can only offer one hint by way of answer. When the subject we are investigating is a bare historical event, I believe the cautious scientific spirit is the only right one ; we must seek earnestly to go no further than the evidence warrants. But, when we are face to face with a Personality, it is very different. There is, in all interpretation of Personality, just as there is in our perception of beauty and moral worth, an element that, while it is based on outward facts, goes far beyond them into something that we can only call an inward light. Our sense of the beauty of a sunset is something far more and deeper than the forms and colours which we perceive with our eyes ; our appreciation of a friend's character comes to us indeed through our outward perception of his looks and words and acts, but these are interpreted by us through the inward knowledge, in our own consciousness, of what these things mean—deep answers to deep. And so when we have gained one real glimpse of the Person of our Lord,

though it comes to us through outward knowledge of the Gospel story, which we may have criticized carefully, we are in a region not of evidence merely but of intuition,—where, the more abundant our love and devotion, the deeper will become our knowledge of the character. We must not talk about having faith in facts, but we may have faith in a Person : that, indeed, is what Christian faith essentially is—the response of our whole being to the Person we recognise as perfectly beautiful and good.

4. This, I take it, is one of the great truths that Ritschl and his followers have taught us. But they have, like all of us, their limitations ; and one of these is, I believe, the discarding as useless of the conception of the “ Logos ” or Divine Word, which the author of the Fourth Gospel (and after him the Fathers) made the foundation of their doctrine of Christ. For myself I cannot so discard it ; it appears to me to contain essential and most serviceable truth. It was, says Dean Inge, the doctrine of the Incarnate Logos that “ converted the intellect of Europe to Christianity ”<sup>1</sup> ; and a missionary in India has recently stated his belief that one great cause of our failure to appeal to the Hindu

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 37.

mind is that we have forgotten it.<sup>1</sup> Now, of course, the philosophical conceptions of the Greek Fathers are outgrown, and we may need a new terminology. But the truth endures that in the "Logos" they found a thought of God that makes a real Incarnation possible: the thought that God has that in Him which is essentially human: that He is not pure absoluteness and infinity and omnipotence—qualities that we may find words for but do not in the least understand—but has that in His nature which leads Him to *limit* His infinity that He may come, as He has always been coming, into real relations with men, revealing Himself to them as they are able to bear it. In the light of this thought we may see that the Incarnation and the Cross were (if we may say so reverently) the natural culmination of this self-sacrificing, self-revealing quality of the God whose name is Love.<sup>2</sup> But the doctrine of the Logos also suggests that the age-long search of man for the Divine—the upward movement

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>2</sup> For a severely philosophic argument that it is only by attributing self-limitation or self-renunciation to the Divine nature that we can get any valid thought of God at all, see Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, especially pp. 243, 453.

of the human soul towards God—is the outcome of that downward movement by which, in self-revealing love, He has always been seeking man. And in the incarnate Christ the two movements unite in one.<sup>1</sup> Jesus expresses the highest and purest experience of sonship with God that the human soul has reached; and, in that same experience of sonship, He is the very manifestation to men of the Father's heart of love. "No one knows the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."

Our faith, then, as Christians and as Friends, centres in a Person: a Person who has always been present in the souls of men, the revealer of God, though unrecognised or dimly apprehended; a Person who in the fulness of time took outward form in Judæa and Galilee, healing the bodies and the souls of men; who brought the age-long process of revelation and redemption to its climax by laying down His life to save them; who through the very depth of humiliation and sacrifice reached His exaltation in glory; who ever lives, not in some far-off heaven but in our midst, evermore to be the inward source of light and love, of power and joy, to those who are united to Him by faith and obedience.

<sup>1</sup> See Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 500.

## APPENDIX.

## A.—PENN'S "CHRISTIAN QUAKER."

*The Christian Quaker* (1673)<sup>1</sup> is one of Penn's most elaborate works, and is largely directed to elucidating his thoughts of Christ as the Light of the world. He deals with the evidences that there was a Divine Light in the souls of the Jews before Christ came in the flesh, and even in the heathen ; and quotes, with sound knowledge, many of the early Fathers—Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and even Augustine—as recognising this. Virgil's Fourth Eclogue is quoted, with more questionable judgment, as evidence that the heathen had some prevision of the coming of Jesus. He defends the practice of calling this universal Light by the name "Christ," quoting Paul's words in 1 Cor. x. 4, "That Rock was Christ" ; and explains that what is meant is not that the whole "Christ" was in every man, but that "He is that fulness from whence all receive a measure of Divine Light and knowledge." Treating of the types and shadows through which he believed that the

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, Vol. I., p. 521.



coming of Christ in the flesh was prefigured, he says :

So then we ought, and we do, by absolute force of Truth, conclude (i.) that the Seed, which is Christ, was in all ages, with Abraham, with the Israelites, and with the prophets ; therefore he was as well *before* he came in that prepared Body, as then and since. (ii.) Yet it is confessed that he was not so clearly revealed, perfectly brought forth, and generally known before his coming as then and since, but more darkly figured out by types and shadowy services ; which, though they cleansed not, saved not, redeemed not, yet did they show forth a more hidden and spiritual substance that was able to cleanse, save and redeem, and did actually all that received it, and were truly subject to it.

Penn recognises very fully the load of human sin that lay upon Jesus in the garden and on the Cross, but, like most of the other early Friends, he maintains that this suffering for the sin of the world had its eternal as well as its temporal aspects. The Light or Seed has always been as a "lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and it has suffered in other holy souls who have experienced the evil of the world, "filling up the measure of Christ's sufferings" before ever He came in the flesh.

But . . . never did that Divine life so eminently show forth itself as in that sanctified and prepared Body, so that what he then suffered and did in that transcendent manifestation may by way of eminency have the credit of the whole work unto itself that he

ever did, or might do afterwards, for man's salvation. . . . The weight of the iniquity of the whole world lay hard upon him, nor was his manhood insensible of it. Under the load of this did he travail, he alone trod the wine-press; that is, all others were then insensible of that eternal wrath which would be the portion of impenitent persons. . . . And as outwardly he gave his life for the world, so he might inwardly shed abroad in their souls the blood of God, that is, the holy purifying life and virtue which is in him as the Word-God, and as which he is the light and life of the world.

Not that we should irreverently rob the holy body of whatsoever acknowledgment is justly due, nor yet separate that which God hath joined; though I confess, with holy fear, I dare not attribute that to an external prepared Being, which it is the natural proper and only work of the Divine Light and Life to operate and effect.

## B.—ILLUSTRATIONS OF ATTACKS ON THE QUAKERS. (p. 43).

For example, William Burnet, in *The Capital Principles of the Quakers Discovered* (1668), quotes this from Humphrey Woolrich's *Declaration to the Baptists* (1659): "Christ was never seen with any carnal eye, nor his voice heard with any carnal ear." So quoted, it sounds like a direct denial of the Incarnation; but when we turn to the actual passage this is what we find:

This is your fallen estate, saith the Lord God, which know not Christ in you the hope of glory—even the same that was before the world was, one with the Father, and

fillet heaven and earth, and was never seen with any carnal eye, nor his voice heard by any carnal ear, but in the pure eternal unchangeable light is he revealed and seen more and more.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite clear that the passage objected to means essentially what is clearly stated in the Fourth Gospel, "No man hath seen God at any time."

So, again, William Russell, endeavouring to prove (1674) that *Quakerism is Paganism*, writes that at a Quaker meeting he heard Josiah Coale affirm that "the Man who was born of the Virgin, and who suffered at Jerusalem, is not the Christ the Saviour of the world," and that "the *true* Christ, in respect of himself, never died." Now the first part of the statement attributed to Coale is only a crude rendering of Penington's distinction between the eternal Christ and the bodily "garment" which for a time He wore; and the other is but a different rendering of what the youthful George Fox said before his parish priest, Nathaniel Stevens, of Drayton-in-the-Clay,—winning the approval of that theologian,—that Christ, as He was man, was an offering for the iniquities

<sup>1</sup> Humphrey Woolrich, *A Declaration to the Baptists*. See volume of *Tracts* in Devonshire House Library, Vol. 56, No. 43.

and transgressions of men, "*but he died not as he was God.*"<sup>1</sup>

The following is typical of many of these attacks. The anonymous writer of *A Parallel between the Doctrine of the Quakers and that of the Chief Heretics* (1700) quotes both Penington and Penn and compares them to the Ebionites, who denied the essential divinity of Christ.

And in this the Quakers outdo the Ebionites. They subtilly distinguish between Jesus and Christ, denying both the divinity of Jesus and the humanity of Christ, so that they do not allow Jesus Christ in one person to be either God or man. . . .

That he took the manhood into God, and hypostatically united it into his own Person, this they cannot believe; for, according to their notion of him, Christ is not a Person but a principle only. Hence it is that they call the body of Jesus a garment, a vail, which Christ some time wore, and a vessel, in which he was pleased some time to dwell, so that they wholly despoil him of his humanity, and utterly deny him to be the Son of Man.

Charles Leslie, in *The Snake in the Grass* (1696) charged the Quakers with denying the Incarnation.

They deny any proper Incarnation of Christ; that is, that he was made flesh, or that he and Jesus were one Person. Yet they allow Jesus to be called Christ, from the dwelling of Christ in him; but for the same reason,

<sup>1</sup> George Fox's *Journal*, Ed. 1901, p. 5.

they take the name Christ to themselves, and say that it belongs to them as well as to Jesus, from the same dwelling of Christ in them as in Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

### C.—THE ATTACKS OF BUGG AND KEITH. (p. 44).

Francis Bugg joined Friends about 1659, but after twenty years turned against them, apparently because he thought, with Wilkinson and Story and Rogers, that the organization set up by George Fox, of monthly and quarterly meetings and the like, hindered the liberty of the Inward Light. In the issue he abandoned his belief in the Inward Light altogether. In 1684 he left the Society, and became a bitter and rancorous opponent. In *New Rome Arraigned* (1693) he violently attacked the doctrine of Penington, saying that it was a denying and disowning of the Jesus Christ who was born and died, through faith in whom alone is salvation possible.

<sup>1</sup> This charge is based on passages in Penington's writings such as this: "Is not the substance, the life, the anointing, called Christ, wherever it is found? Doth not the name belong to the whole body (and every member in the body) as well as to the head? Are they not all of one; yea, all one in the anointing?" (*Some Queries concerning Christ*, Works, Vol. III., p. 54.) We may remember that the Mystics have always used language expressing the oneness of the believer with Christ, including Paul, who wrote "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17).

The tenor of it [Penington's doctrine] runs to own the Light, the Life, the Substance, something in the body which was not capable of being seen otherwise than by the eye of faith, nor capable of weariness, of thirst, of hunger, of buffeting, of scourging, of being crucified, and hanged on a tree; this in a confused mysterious sense they will own to be Christ; and this is no other than they dream is in them, and which they attribute to one another . . . so that consequently so many Quakers, so many Christs.

His principal charge, repeated with persistency, was that the Quakers "divide the humanity from the Godhead, which is, in plain terms, a plain denial of Christ."

George Keith, a Scotchman, was a more scholarly man than Bugg, and was indeed one of the ablest of those who joined the Quakers. "Convinced" about 1663, he became one of the most powerful preachers of the "Inward Light," and travelled on the Continent and elsewhere, with George Fox and William Penn, bearing his full share of persecution and imprisonment. He shone particularly in public discussions, especially with the Presbyterians, among whom he had been brought up. About 1689, after some years in America, he settled as a schoolmaster in Philadelphia, having been for more than twenty-five years in close unity with Friends. Soon after this, dissatisfaction began to be felt with

some of his public utterances, in which he charged his brother ministers with undervaluing the historic Christ and the Scriptures. A scholarly mind like his might well be dissatisfied with the crude and ignorant way in which, when the Light was growing dim, the inward Christ was doubtless often preached ; and Keith might have rendered good service in keeping things in a true perspective, had he been of a less contentious spirit and more able to control his temper. A breach occurred between the leading Friends in Pennsylvania and himself, and he began to organize a separate body, which he called "The Christian Quakers." In 1692 the Yearly Meeting disowned him for "a spirit of reviling, railing, lying, slandering and falsely accusing." The next year, having secured a considerable following in America, he came to England, and laid his case before the Yearly Meeting in London. Several days were spent in hearing it, and the minutes that were adopted show delightfully the patience, brotherly love, and spiritual insight which still remained among Friends, and a most earnest desire that all should be settled in a Christian spirit. Unfortunately Keith again lost his temper, and the meeting at last decided that he had "gone

from the blessed unity of the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ." He gained but few adherents in this country, and after establishing himself in Turner's Hall, where he preached eloquent sermons against the Quakers, he joined the Established Church and was ordained by the Bishop of London. His followers in Pennsylvania were soon disorganized, most of them joining the Episcopalians or Baptists.<sup>1</sup>

In 1679 Keith had written a book *The True Christ Owned, as he is True God and Perfect Man*, in which he tried to give a rational answer, based on New Testament teaching, to the attacks made on the Quaker position. It is a solid and weighty treatise, according to the religious ideas of the day, and much more learned than most of the Quaker writings. He makes no use of Penington's theory which identified the humanity of Christ with his body, expressly maintaining that His "flesh" included His "soul."

In *The Plea of the Innocent* (1692), he replied to the charges that were already beginning to be made against him, urging that the "Christ

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of this controversy, see Chap. III. in Book V. of *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, by Dr. Rufus M. Jones.



within " is not *all* that is needed, but must be supplemented with historical belief.

All the imposition they can allege on G. K. is that he did preach faith in the Man Christ without them, as well as faith in Christ the Light in them; and that Christ hath the true body of man in heaven, and in that body he will come and appear without us to judge the quick and the dead.

In various printed *Sermons*, delivered in London in 1694, he labours to show that historical belief must enter into saving faith, denying that his thoughts had changed, and avoiding direct attacks on Friends. In his *Christian Catechism* (1698) he states (in the Preface) that he now sees no objection (as earlier he had done) to speaking of " three Persons in the Trinity," and (in the body of the book) he insists on belief in doctrines being necessary to salvation, and points out the " great errors " of those who say that " Christ is only God, that neither his flesh nor his soul was any part of him, but only as a garment," that " Christ is nothing else but the *Light Within* every man," and that " Christ and the Holy Ghost are one." He argues that just as a field needs good seed as well as fertile soil to produce a crop of wheat, so the Inward Light is not enough without the outward knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In his *Fourth Narrative of Proceedings at Turner's Hall* (1700) he throws off restraint, and gives railing answers to many passages quoted from Quaker books, plentifully interspersed with such epithets as "vile heresies." Ignoring entirely the deep and lively Christian experience of which most of the expressions he criticizes were the outcome, he gives a narrow and illiberal interpretation to them. Most of them he treats as being a denial by the Quakers of the reality of the Incarnation. The book is a melancholy exhibition of intolerance, consisting of long disquisitions on points of speculative theology, always insisted on as vital to faith.

#### D.—ELIAS HICKS'S SERMONS.

I have thought it right to say so much in defence of Hicks, because I believe that, owing to the exclusively one-sided reports which reached this country, he has been sadly misjudged. But when we come to consider his Christology, I can only characterize it as deplorable. I do not think it fair to judge him, as has often been done, by isolated extracts, torn from their context, which cannot be rightly understood except in relation to his general line of thought; and as

it is impossible to quote long passages I can only refer those who wish to understand his thoughts to the Sermons themselves, which may be consulted at Devonshire House. What he did was to carry to its logical issue the dualism that underlay the teaching of Penington and Penn; and he consequently fell into "Docetism" in a still more pronounced form. "Spirit" for him was all that counted in the religious sphere; the outward or visible could not possibly be Divine, or have any religious significance, except as a type or figure of something spiritual. "Spirit can only beget spirit" was one of his central thoughts; and consequently Christ the Son of God was for him a purely inward and spiritual conception.<sup>1</sup> The holy life lived by Jesus in the flesh he fully recognised, and he used it freely, including the story of His victory over temptation, as an example and encouragement to us.<sup>2</sup> The death

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sermons*, pp. 10, 11. "Who was his [Jesus'] father? He was begotten of God. We cannot suppose that it was the outward body of flesh and blood that was begotten of God, but a birth of the spiritual life in the soul. We must apply it internally and spiritually. For nothing can be a son of God, but that which is spirit; and nothing but the soul of man is a recipient for the light and spirit of God."

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons*, pp. 67-70.

upon the Cross is also quoted as a sublime example of self-sacrifice, and as figuring the death to sin that all must die ; but that it has any relation to the forgiveness of sin Hicks could not see.<sup>1</sup> The miracles of Jesus he entirely accepted, as having been really wrought by Him, but he found them chiefly of value as allegories or figures of spiritual blessing.<sup>2</sup> An outward person, he would say, could heal people's bodies, but only an inward Saviour could cure their souls.

#### E.—J. J. GURNEY'S *ESSAYS*.

The longest of the *Essays* (160 pages) Gurney devotes to "the Scriptural Account of Jesus Christ." He says "he hopes not to forget" His humanity, and does indeed state quite explicitly, rather as something taken for granted, that "His body was a human body, and His mind a human mind, . . . He was really and absolutely *man*" ; and it is strange, after this,

<sup>1</sup> *The Quaker*, Vol. I., pp. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *The Quaker*, vol. I., p. 68 ; also extract quoted in the text, p. 62. We may note that to a certain extent Hicks could quote in support of his allegorising method the example of the Fourth Gospel, which finds a spiritual meaning in certain of the miracles of Jesus, such as the feeding of the five thousand.

to find him using the "prepared body" passage from *Hebrews*, as Isaac Penington had used it. But his principal object, he states, is to bring out the Deity of Christ, and it is to this that almost the whole of the Essay is devoted. After treating of the pre-existence of Christ as the Eternal Word, he comes to the Incarnation. "When the Son or Word of the Father assumed our nature, and was born a child into the world, he who before had been God *only* became *God and Man*." The two "natures," he states, were combined in Him in an inconceivable union; but he apparently regarded them as placed side by side, just as the creed of Chalcedon had left them. For, while he speaks of limitations in the human knowledge of our Lord, he also describes Him as partaking (while in the flesh) of Divine omniscience.<sup>1</sup> In other words, he attributes to our Lord a double consciousness—a confusion of thought for which the doctrine of the Creed has left an open door, but of which there is no trace in the Gospels. In the pages where he deals with the pre-existent Christ, it is remarkable to find only one brief sentence

<sup>1</sup> p. 285. The evidence (which is insufficient) he finds in our Lord's "personal knowledge of the secret thoughts of men."

referring to that which had been the central conviction of the early Friends, that His Divine Light was given to all men. "He was also," says Gurney, "the spiritual quickener and enlightener of mankind." In a previous Essay, in a few halting phrases, he had avowed the belief that "a divine influence is given to all men, to be their cure"<sup>1</sup>; but with these exceptions the "Universal and Saving Light" of Christ is entirely passed over in the *Essays*. In one of them, indeed, he seems plainly to deny it—where he speaks of those who are sitting "in darkness and under the shadow of death" as "*destitute of all capacity* for an inheritance with the saints in light."<sup>2</sup>

In this matter, however, it would appear that Gurney was not quite consistent with himself. In his *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends* (Seventh edition, 1834), he fully accepts the view of the early Friends, that "Christ Himself, manifested by His Spirit in the heart, is that 'true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'"<sup>3</sup> He insists, just as

<sup>1</sup> *Essays*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays*, p. 447.

<sup>3</sup> *Observations*, pp. 5-6, 21, 26ff. Also *Letter to Isaac Crewdson* (1835).

Barclay did, that this Light is wholly Divine, and is no part of man's nature (which he regards as wholly corrupted by the Fall), and that it is "procured" for us through the mediation and sacrifice for Christ. He freely acknowledges that "the outward knowledge of Christ is not absolutely indispensable to salvation, and that other persons who are completely destitute of that knowledge may also be saved from sin, and from the penalties which are attached to it, through the secret operations of Divine grace." Here he parts company with Crewdson and the Plymouth Brethren, as he does also in his strong insistence on the necessity of the light of the Holy Spirit for the right understanding of Scripture, and of its direct and perceptible influence and guidance, not only in preaching but in all the affairs of life.<sup>1</sup>

While at times he identifies the universal Light of God's Spirit with the pre-incarnate "Word" of God, and speaks of the Holy Spirit or Comforter in the hearts of believers as one with the risen and ascended Christ (as Paul frequently did), at other times he seems inclined (probably through the influence of the orthodox

<sup>1</sup> *Observations*, pp. 76 ff. Also *Declaration of his Faith* (1846).

doctrine of the Trinity) to distinguish between Christ and the Spirit. And he considers it a serious error—dangerous to the souls of men—to identify Christ with the light He sheds, so reducing Him to a “principle.”<sup>1</sup> Addressing in a letter the followers of Elias Hicks at Baltimore, he says :

Under the imagination that we have *the whole Christ*, as a *thing or substance*, in ourselves, we first disregard and then deny the divine incarnate Saviour of whom the Scriptures testify ; and on the plea of an inward and spiritual relation we renounce the one great sacrifice for sin as the means of our reconciliation with God, and the ground of our hope of salvation.


This passage illustrates the grounds of J. J. Gurney’s dread of mysticism.

<sup>1</sup> *Brief Remarks on Impartiality in the Interpretation of Scripture* (1836).



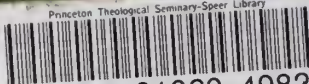


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